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INFO RUEHZK/ECOWAS COLLECTIVE
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 9022
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0103
RUEHWR/AMEMBASSY WARSAW 0465
RUEHCD/AMCONSUL CIUDAD JUAREZ 0444
RUEHIT/AMCONSUL ISTANBUL 0443
RUEHSO/AMCONSUL SAO PAULO 0422
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LAGOS 000506

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STATE FOR AF/W
STATE FOR INR/AA
STATE PASS OPIC FOR ZHAN AND MSTUCKART
DOE FOR CAROLYN GAY
WARSAW FOR LISA PIASCIK
CIUDAD JUAREZ FOR DONNA BLAIR
ISTANBUL FOR TASHAWNA SMITH
SAO PAULO FOR ANDREW WITHERSPOON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/13/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [NI](#)
SUBJECT: SOUTHERN NIGERIA POLITICAL TIDBITS FOR JUNE 2007

REF: LAGOS 269

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Classified By: Acting Consul General Donald McConnell for reasons 1.4 (B) and (D)

11. (U) Summary: This cable is a summary of recent political events in the Southern Nigeria political region. End summary.

Popular South East Party Conspicuously
Absent from Unity Government Proposal

12. (C) Conspicuously absent from President Umaru Yar'Adua's proposals for a "unity government" was the popular south-east based All Progressives Grand Alliance (APGA), whose Peter Obi recently won a court challenge to restore him as Governor in Anambra State through 2010. The People's Progressive Alliance (PPA), whose presidential candidate, former Abia State Governor Orji Kalu was recently arrested by the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC), was included in the unity government negotiations. (Comment: Kalu's arrest notwithstanding, the inclusion of Kalu's PPA and the exclusion of APGA in the unity government negotiations could indicate a certain level of comfort by the dominant People's Democratic Party (PDP) with the PPA. End comment.)

Ekiti: INEC Tinkering Brings Electoral Deadlock

13. (C) Immediately after the April 14 elections, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) announced 14 seats in the 26 member Ekiti State House of Assembly had been won by the Action Congress (AC), 6 by the People's Democratic Party, 3 by the All Nigerian People's Party, and 1 by the Action Party (AP), with three seats still under dispute. The assembly results appeared at odds with the gubernatorial

result, in which INEC declared PDP candidate Segun Oni the victor with over half the vote. INEC subsequently adjusted the State Assembly results, awarding the PDP all the seats previously declared as ANPP and AP seats, as well as the disputed seats and one of the AC's seats, bringing the PDP to parity with the AC. According to Wale Ojo Lanre, Chairman of the Nigerian Union of Journalists (NUJ), the 13 PDP legislators now equal the number of AC legislators in the state assembly, a situation which has led to the current assembly stalemate. The AC is contesting the State House of Assembly elections in 11 constituencies before the election tribunal (Septel).

Enugu: Nnamani's Ebeano Faction
Controls Commissioner Appointments

¶4. (C) Osita Ogbu, Executive Director of the Centre for the Advancement of Democracy and the Rule of Law, told Poloff on June 22 that former Governor Chimaroke Nnamani's Ebeano power clique remained in control in Enugu State. Ogbu said Governor Sullivan Chime, Nnamani's handpicked successor, had upon becoming Governor, made public pronouncements about putting an end to favoritism and promoting reforms. However, when Chime needed to select his 21 state commissioners, Ebeano presented him with a list and instructed him to accept the names or risk the exposure in the election tribunal of the vote fraud in which he engaged, Ogbu said. Chime accepted the Ebeano-sponsored list.

Oyo: Adedibu Selects Akala's Cabinet

¶5. (C) Similarly, Oyo State strongman Lamidi Adedibu

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dictated Governor Adebayo Alao-Akala's selection of State commissioners. According to Ojo-Lanre of NUJ, Adedibu selected 12 out of the 15 commissioners. Lanre said Akala protested but Adedibu would not relent.

¶6. (C) Ojo-Lanre told Poloff that AC gubernatorial candidate Taoheed Adedaja, who finished third in the election, was seeking to become a commissioner in the Akala government. Adedaja, a close ally of Adedibu, had decided not to contest the election before the tribunal because he had "lost his nerve", Ojo-Lanre said.

Ondo: AC Suspends Candidate for
Joining Agagu's Administration

¶7. (U) In Ondo State, Governor Olusegun Agagu announced he was forming a governing coalition with six other parties, including third-place AC gubernatorial candidate Ademola Adegoroye, but excluding runner-up Labor Party candidate, Olusegun Mimiko. The AC announced the suspension of Adegoroye from the party on the day following the coalition announcement.

Comment

¶8. (C) Post-election coalitions are still sorting themselves out, and struggles similar to these can be expected to continue for months in states throughout the south. Many state governors are already discovering how tightly their political patrons intend to exercise control. While some unsuccessful gubernatorial candidates have chosen to join new governors in so-called "unity coalitions," in general runners-up are seeking redress for their losses before the election tribunals. End Comment.

